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Improving the Civil-Military Relationship: Diversity and the U.S. Army

Abstract

Although the U.S. Army has significantly increased racial diversity in the aggregate, non-white Americans remain underrepresented as commissioned officers, especially in the General Officer ranks. This is a significant defense policy problem because research shows a strong correlation among the diversity of senior leaders and effectively processing complex information to generate innovative, creative, and efficient solutions. These positive traits of diversity will help General Officers prepare for and manage the long-term and strategic threats posed by peer or near-peer competitors and violent non-state actors. Increased diversity also improves the civil-military relationship by ensuring Army Generals mirror the nation they serve and the soldiers they lead. This paper addresses the lack of racial diversity among U.S. Army General Officers by using descriptive statistical analysis to outline racial diversity trends over the past 10-years and then identifying where and how policies can be most effective. The paper's findings provide policy makers three options to increase U.S. Army General's racial diversity.

Introduction

Through desegregating units, allowing women to serve in combat occupations, and allowing Americans to serve regardless of sexual orientation, the U.S. Army has made substantial progress in increasing diversity across the force.¹ However, certain aspects of diversity, especially among senior leaders, remain problematic. Multiple characteristics, such as ethnicity and gender, among others, can measure diversity, but this research concentrates on race. Due to varying definitions, categories, and reporting methods on race, this article aggregates all racial minority groups, meaning all non-whites. This does not intend to overlook the significant differences between racial minority groups, rather help illustrate the differences between the racial majority and the collective minority of Americans within the largest branch of the military, the Army, and among its General Officers. Therefore, despite some progress, the Army must implement policy changes to increase General Officers' racial diversity, allowing for increased organizational performance and improved civil-military relations.

Morris Janowitz and Peter Feaver expanded civil-military relations theory by providing a new lens to analyze the relationship. Their research drew attention to the civil-military gap, broadly the sociological and cultural differences between the American society and the military.² One part of the multi-faceted relationship concentrates on, “whether the military is representative of the society they serve and whether the military is viewed or view themselves separate from society.”³ A narrow and narrowing civil-military gap helps to ensure that the military generally and senior leaders specifically, share similar interests, norms, and values with the society it protects. This reduces the chance of fracturing the already unequal dialogue described by Elliot Cohen or the military overpowering civil leaders, as feared by Feaver’s civil–military *problematique*.⁴

Furthermore, the diversity of Army General Officers and the specific characteristic of race are worthy of examination for more than simple academic purposes. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) emphasized during Congressional testimony in July 2020 the need to examine the military’s diversity and, “ensure it is a place where all Americans see themselves represented and have equal opportunity to succeed, especially in leadership positions.”⁵ Fully aware of the current

national climate, the CJCS admitted that the military broadly and the Army specifically are not making these efforts for political correctness, rather ensuring the military and its senior leaders are representative of the nation they serve and harnessing the full potential of the nation's human capital.⁶ Additionally, the CJCS's comments coincide with the Army's *People Strategy* that similarly emphasizes the need to draw talent from America's diverse population and then maximize their career opportunities as well as ensure the Army is representative of America.⁷ Moreover, race is an important characteristic of diversity to examine because there is a strong correlation among races and their associated backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives; these differences can add positive dynamics to group composition.⁸ Unlike other diversity categories, race is a distinguishable and unconcealable characteristic that is accentuated by the legacy of discriminatory beliefs and transcends other biodemographic attributes. An examination of organizational theory to frame the analysis, the benefits of a diverse organization and leadership team, demographic trends, and institutional obstacles hindering minority advancement will precede a discussion of policy options that address increasing racial diversity among active-duty Army General Officers.

Theoretical Approach

One of the major fields of organizational theory, open systems theory, provides a broad framework to analyze an organization like the Army that seeks increased diversity. The theory prescribes that, "organizations are comprised of shifting coalitions of internal and external participants and copes best with the environment by finding the optimal fit between organizational characteristics, environmental forces, and what it seeks to achieve."⁹ An organization will also use active methods to achieve the organization's needs.¹⁰ The Army fits this notion of an open system as it is comprised of a rigid hierarchal rank structure, split between officers and enlisted personnel (internal participants), and is managed by politically appointed civilian managers (external participants). The all-volunteer Army (organizational characteristic) must recruit from the increasingly diverse national population (environmental forces), use a closed personnel system to promote (organizational characteristic), and follow its' *People Strategy* to narrow the civil-military gap and capitalize on human capital to gain a competitive advantage over adversaries (what the organization seeks). Accordingly, this article assumes organizational characteristics and

the structure of external participants remain constant and environmental forces continue to transform. This will then require the Army to use active methods (policy), concentrated on a portion of its internal participants, to harness the benefits of diversity and achieve organizational goals.

The Benefits of Diversity and its Implication to the Army

Decades of diversity research provides the foundation for the information/decision-making theory, an organizational theory sub-field that augments open system theory. This theory argues that increased diversity leads to, “divergent perspectives that improves decision quality and performance.”¹¹ The underlining assumptions of this theory are that diverse groups offer, “a large pool of task-relevant resources, including skills, knowledge, and unique ideas that enhance organizational outcomes, more than homogeneous group composition.”¹² Contemporary research on private and public organizations substantiates this theory.

A 2018 study of nearly 1,700 companies that were in eight countries, varied in size, and represented different industries found, “a statistically significant relationship between diversity and innovation outcomes.”¹³ Dr. Katherine Phillips, former vice dean at Columbia Business School, and Dr. Scott Page, a distinguished professor of Complexity, Social Science, and Management at the University of Michigan, found similar results in their separate research. They found a strong correlation between increased team diversity and its ability to innovate, think creatively, more accurately predict future outcomes, and effectively process complex information to make well-informed decisions.¹⁴ Dr. Linda Hill of Harvard Business School added that a diverse group cultivates a creative and effective problem-solving team, especially in the long-term.¹⁵ Dr. Phillips concluded these results materialize because diversity, “forces members to prepare better, anticipate alternative viewpoints, and to expect that reaching consensus will take effort.”¹⁶

Reviewed public sector studies segregated the scope of diversity to concentrate on race and found comparable results. A multi-year study evaluated data from multiple U.S. federal organizations, including executive departments and independent agencies, that ranged in size and function. The research demonstrated that, unlike age or gender diversity, “a highly diverse workforce in terms of race contributes to organizational

goal achievement in the federal government.”¹⁷ Empirical evidence from state-level agencies found comparable results. Researchers gathered data on over 40 organizations and ultimately concluded that increased racial diversity contributes to positive organizational performance.¹⁸ Whether the public or private sector, organizations benefit from diversity broadly and racial diversity specifically by capitalizing on the assorted talent within the workforce.

The Central Intelligence Agency’s Sherman Kent School and the RAND Corporation also researched effective ways private and public sector organizations overcame uncertainty and succeeded in their mission. The authors correlated successful organizations to sensemaking, a process defined as the collection of, “experienced-based, sub-consciously processed judgments and imaginations” that allow individuals to make sense of the environment relevant to their organizational goals.¹⁹ As previously stated, races strongly correlate with distinctive backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, which are foundational characteristics that, when diverse, allow for effective sensemaking. This supports the notion that racial diversity will contribute to the diversity of thought and thinking, enabling effective sensemaking. However, the literature also indicates there are limits to the benefits of diversity.

The primary limitations of harnessing the benefits of a diverse group directly relate to the duration and scope of the organization’s mission and task. Dr. Page concedes that more homogeneous groups are more effective with routine tasks.²⁰ Dr. Hill found similar results and concluded that in the short-term, homogeneous teams are more effective at, “building relationships, communicating, and integrating efforts.”²¹ Meaning, a homogeneous group’s inherent similarities, such as their educational background, cultural experiences, and socioeconomic status, allow for shared perspectives and to connect, communicate, and quickly achieve a common goal. However, when faced with long-term or complex problems, as previously noted, those inherent similarities are disadvantageous by limiting the group’s innovation and creativity for non-traditional yet effective solutions.

Collectively, the research shows that the Army would benefit by having a diverse group of senior officers leading the military’s most vital formations. Operational force commanders, specifically Combatant

Command Commanders, “respond to significant military contingencies, take action to defer conflict, and command the armed forces as directed by the Secretary of Defense.”²² Those statutory requirements compel commanders to address conventional military challenges as well as the expanding role of cyber, space, nuclear, and non-traditional threats such as election interference and artificial island creation. In addition to his role as one of the Joint Chiefs, the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) is responsible for preparing the Army for assigned missions and developing plans that support national priorities.²³ Additionally, institutional force commanders provide the operational force manned, trained, organized, and resourced units and capabilities.²⁴ The CSA and institutional force commanders support the needs of the operational force commanders today and set the conditions for their success in the future. Collectively, the positive traits of diversity will help Army General Officers develop creative and innovative solutions that overcome their adaptive, complex, unpredictable, and unique challenges, competing organizational and domestic political priorities, and the limits of time, resources, and intelligence.

Increasing racial diversity in the Army, especially at the senior leader level, also positively affects the civil-military relationship. This relationship is the broad interaction between “members of the state” (citizens), “institutions of the state” (government), and the “military of the state” (Army).²⁵ These interactions generate academic and real world debate; one question concentrates on which members of the state serve within the military of the state.²⁶ This question has been contentious during America’s turbulent racial history, but remains highly relevant, especially in light of the pronounced racial inequities highlighted in the social justice movement of 2020.

The multi-faceted dynamics of civil-military relations and who serves is most pronounced with senior leaders. General Officers, specifically the CSA and the operational and institutional commanders of Combatant Commands, Army Service Commands, and Army Commands, provide government officials consequential advice, especially on military employment, and lead inherently dangerous operations. Whereas citizens provide their sons and daughters to fill the Army’s ranks and execute those hazardous missions. Therefore, by being proportionately comprised of the nation’s citizenry and the soldiers they lead, these General Officers will

more likely have similar societal and cultural experiences and hold similar core values. These similarities will help solidify trust between Army leaders and citizens. Moreover, unlike the distrust between the Army and minority citizens during the Vietnam War, where African-Americans carried a larger proportionate burden than white Americans, the potential of the increase of trust allows the Army access to more minority talent to fill its officer ranks, increase the officer corps' overall capacity, and reinforce equitable representation.

In line with open systems theory, the literature also makes clear that an organization must take deliberate and meaningful steps to harness the full benefit of a diverse team and organization. McKinsey and Company, a global management and consulting firm, compiled data from hundreds of firms across the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Latin America on organizational diversity. They found that simply recruiting a target group or dispassionately enforcing diversity policies would not maximize the benefits of a diverse team.²⁷ Furthermore, the research and consulting firm, Booze Allen Hamilton, and other research found that successful organizations have senior leaders creating an environment supportive to diversity and cultivating its benefits through mentoring junior minority members.²⁸ Ultimately, this allows senior leaders to help the organization recruit, retain, and promote top minority talent. These studies are supported by comments from the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and only black or African American to hold the position, retired General Colin Powell, who placed heavy emphasis on mentors helping guide his long and successful military career.²⁹

Diversity within the Army

Figure 1 illustrates that the Army has the most racially diverse General Officer corps among the military services. The Army is the only service to remain above the Department of Defense (DoD) average every year, for the past ten years, and has the largest percentage of minority General Officers in 2018 at 18 percent.³⁰ Correspondingly, all other services sit below the 12 percent DoD average.³¹ However, the success of an increasingly racially diverse General Officer corps, relative to the other services, is less impressive and arguably less important when examining the Army compared to the American citizenry and to the soldiers they lead.

Figure 1. Service Comparison: Racial Minority Flag Officers

Source: Author

Data from the U.S Census Bureau clearly shows the United States is becoming more racially diverse. Currently, the racial composition of the United States is 76 percent white, 13 percent black or African American, 6 percent Asian, and 4 percent other.³² Projections for 2060 show white Americans will comprise a smaller majority at 68 percent, but black or African Americans will increase to 15 percent and Asians to 9 percent of the total population.³³ Similarly, the number of individuals associating with two or more races will grow from 2.6 percent in 2016 to 6.2 percent in 2060.³⁴ As depicted in Figure 2, however, these American demographic trends contrast with the current racial composition of General Officers. The composition of Army Generals is 18 percent racial minorities, while all other officers sit at nearly 26 percent, a rate that has been nearly constant over the past decade.³⁵ Collectively, this shows Army Generals are less racially diverse than the American public and, with the current pool of subordinate officers, have only minimal room to expand and keep pace with America's changing composition.

Figure 2.

Source: Author

Much like the comparison with the American public, Army Generals are also not representative of the soldiers they lead. Figure 3 depicts that General Officers are the least racially diverse group within the Army and have been since 2009.³⁶ Additionally, all other U.S. Army ranks collectively average 32 percent minority composition, which is significantly greater than General Officers.³⁷ So, although that gap remains between the Army's senior officers and the rest of the force, the gap is closing partially due to other ranks experiencing a near stagnation or decline in racial diversity over the past decade. Additionally, minorities comprise a larger percentage of junior officers compared to mid-grade officers and Generals.³⁸ This indicates that the Army is unable to retain racial minorities at the same rate as white officers and, overall, hinders the continued increase of General Officer diversity.

Figure 3. U.S. Army Racial Minorities: By Rank

Source: Author

Supplementing the aggregate analysis, an examination of the Army's most strategic General Officer positions reveal pronounced racial disparity within these ranks. The Army's most senior commanders have significant influence on Army policy and are key stakeholders in globally integrating defense capability. The majority of these three- and four-star generals are white officers that have a background in infantry, armor, artillery, or aviation career fields, commonly referred to as combat arms. Collectively, of the current 17 Combatant Command, Army Service Component Command, and Army Command commanding officer positions held by Army officers, 16 are white officers and 11 came from combat arms career fields.³⁹ Likewise, the highest-ranking officer position within the Army, the CSA, suffers from a history of racial disparity. The CSA is the principal advisor to the Secretary of the Army and, as part of the Joint Chiefs, a military advisor to the National Security Council, Secretary of Defense, and President.⁴⁰ Since 1903, when the position was first created, only one underrepresented racial minority has held this position, current occupant excluded, and nearly all gained their experience in combat arms career fields.⁴¹ Hence, if the Army continues prioritizing combat arms experience when selecting for these commands and the CSA, then it should remediate policy to increase the racial diversity of junior combat arms officers.

This lack of diversity among General Officers is problematic for two primary reasons. It prevents Army senior leaders from capitalizing on the benefits of diversity, such as effective sensemaking, developing innovative solutions for the Army's force structure, and solving complex and evolving

geopolitical challenges. It also prevents General Officers from being representative of the Army they lead and the nation they serve, which will, if left unresolved, widen the civil-military gap. As a result, the Army needs to implement aggressive policies to further increase the racial diversity of General Officers within the “military of the state” to better mirror the “people of the state.” These policies will maximize access to human capital today and set conditions for additional qualified minority officers to compete for future General Officer selection. Accordingly, a fuller understanding of why minorities are self-selecting out of combat arms assignments and issues with the branching process help reveal what prevented and will continue to prevent the General Officer ranks becoming more racially diverse. This analysis will then influence policy option recommendations that address the principal causes.

Obstacles to Increasing Diversity

Prior to commissioning as lieutenants and beginning their military careers, there are two prominent reasons why minority cadets self-select out of career fields that would make them significantly more competitive for consideration for General Officer. Minority cadets fairly or unfairly associate combat arms assignments, especially special operations assignments, with a racist culture.⁴² Additionally, multiple studies concluded that minorities choose logistics and other support branch career fields because they value the perceived and real civilian sector marketability of skills attained in those positions.⁴³ These factors led to 6 percent of African American cadets compared to 25 percent of white cadets to select combat arms career fields as one of their top three choices.⁴⁴ Consequently, by self-selecting out of combat arms career fields, racial minority cadets, regardless of commissioning source, are inadvertently limiting their command opportunities, which ultimately reduces their competitiveness for General Officer consideration.

It is important to note that minority cadets are self-selecting out of those career fields, despite being competitive for all career fields. The competitiveness is based on analyzing the national order-of-merit list (OML), where senior ROTC leaders rank cadets according to their academic, leadership, and physical fitness performance. Based on the OML, the top 10 percent of cadets receive their first choice with the remainder paired to a career assignment based on personal preferences

and Army requirements.⁴⁵ A recent RAND report examined the career field assignment process of the Army's largest commissioning source, Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). The report found African American cadets, that were highly competitive or that ranked as high on the national OML as their white peers, were still more likely to choose non-combat arms career fields.⁴⁶ Additionally, 63 percent of African Americans cadets received their top branch choice compared to only 55 percent of white cadets.⁴⁷ Moreover, since the most competitive career fields, defined by a slot-to-applicant ratio, are not combat arms, minorities are not being crowded out by the larger pool of white cadets.⁴⁸ Thus, despite their competitiveness, minority cadets are self-selecting into non-combat arms career fields, which ultimately reduces the pool of highly competitive minorities for General Officer consideration. These findings on minority cadets' preferences are especially significant considering ROTC commissions nearly 4,500 of the approximate 6,000 total Army cadets annually.⁴⁹

Alternatively, the second largest commissioning source, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point (USMA), which commissions around 1,000 cadets annually, contributes additional variables to the racial disparity of Army senior leaders.⁵⁰ Compared to the much larger ROTC cadet population, USMA is less racially diverse, but receives a larger quantity of combat arms branch assignments.⁵¹ This compounds the aforementioned issues and ultimately results in USMA's majority white cadet population having a greater chance of entering into combat arms career fields, regardless of individual ability or personal preference. However, it is important to note that USMA's 1992 enrollment included only 15 percent minority, but has over doubled in recent years with the recent class being the most racial and ethnically diverse in the academy's history.⁵² Although USMA's unique contribution to this problem may continue to fade in the coming years, the self-selecting factors will remain significant obstacles that ROTC and USMA must overcome to resolve underrepresentation of minorities as General Officer.

The lack of racial diversity among newly commissioned combat arms officers significantly contributes to the lack of diversity among General Officers. Similar to the anecdote of select Army commanders, RAND found that nearly 80 percent of all Army Generals came from combat arms career fields.⁵³ Junior combat arms officers are majority white and these

career fields receive more opportunities to serve in command and multiple successful commands makes an officer more competitive for senior level promotions.⁵⁴ Additionally, the Army's closed personnel system requires General Officers to come from internal promotion. Although trends show minorities are increasing in combat arms branches, there remains a significant difference in retention rates among whites and racial minorities.⁵⁵ Therefore, there is an input problem; whites are overrepresented in career fields most often selected for the Army's senior positions.

Policy Options

Within the framework of open system theory, this article assumes no change with the structure of external participants (politically appointed civilian managers), the organization structure (all volunteer force with a closed personnel system), and what the organization seeks (a reduced civil-military gap). The analysis of the composition of internal participants (soldiers broadly and General Officers specifically) and a key environmental factor (diversifying American demographics) reveals that active measures (policy) are required to enable the Army to achieve what it seeks. Furthermore, past research identified some of the prime challenges to increasing diversity within all military services included a lack of outreach to qualified minority groups and mentorship programs.⁵⁶ That analysis also identified the overwhelming majority of General Officers begin their careers in combat arms career fields.⁵⁷ However, this article expands upon that research by concentrating exclusively on the Army, General Officers, and racial diversity. Additionally, it identifies obstacles that have and will continue to prevent increased racial diversity within the Army as well as policy options to remedy those specific areas.

This research analyzed three policy options based on their feasibility to achieve the policy outcome with limited resources, their acceptability of costs and stakeholders support, and their suitability in resolving an ancillary problem to the issue of minority underrepresentation. These options are not meant to be the only solutions, but do provide pragmatic ways to resolve the issues and help further the discussion. Based on the fluid national political climate and the dynamic array of stakeholders impacted, a combination of all three policy options would likely yield the most effective and sustainable outcome. However, the Army could

implement any one of the policy options individually to address at least a portion of the overall issue.

Policy Option One: Increase Minority Recruits

Policy option one seeks to expand minority enrollment in ROTC programs and at USMA to increase the pool of potential minority candidates for future General Officer consideration. Part one of the policy establishes ROTC partnerships and increases scholarship allotments at schools comprised of large minority student bodies. Of the 272 universities within the United States that have on-campus ROTC programs, only 23, or less than 9 percent, are Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU); overall, less than 25 percent of all HBCU have on-campus ROTC programs.⁵⁸ Additionally, the approximate 777,000 undergraduates attending the statewide university systems of California, Texas, and New York consist of nearly 63 percent, 57 percent, and 44 percent minorities respectively.⁵⁹ Furthermore, many of the over 20 academic institutions and campuses within these systems, such as UC San Diego and UT El Paso, maintain the highest percentage of Asian, Hispanic, and Latino minority student populations in the country.⁶⁰ For those reasons, the Army can increase minority enrollment by establishing or expanding ROTC at these schools. This expansion is a reallocation of ROTC slots from other civilian universities across the nation, but not from USMA. Part two seeks to increase minorities' overall enrollment at USMA by focusing their recruiting campaign on qualified minorities. Collectively, this policy does not lower recruitment standards nor does it establish racial recruitment quotas. The Army will continue to recruit the same high-quality Americans to serve as officers, but the recruitment focus will emphasize traditional minority communities. Overall, this policy expands the pool of racially diverse junior officers, which increases the opportunity for more senior leader diversity and is a foundational factor that enhances the subsequent two policy options.

The first policy option has minor challenges to its feasibility and suitability. This policy requires only minimal additional resources, other than funding. Additionally, policy implementation will likely increase minority enrollment in ROTC and at USMA and, assuming no changes to current officer retention rates, lead to a corollary larger pool of senior minority officers for General Officer consideration.

Moderate financial costs and potential public opposition challenge the acceptability of this policy option. The cost of additional studies, pilot programs, and the changes or expansion of certain ROTC programs would generate moderate financial costs. More significant, there would likely be political or societal opposition against increasing racial minority recruitment into the Army, especially if the goal is to increase minorities entering the more dangerous career fields. The optics of increasing minorities to serve, especially in the current political climate where racial inequality is at the forefront of political discourse, may resurface negative feelings from the Vietnam era and similarly generate a public backlash. A careful public affairs campaign would need to emphasize the benefits of senior leaders being representative of the American public and of the soldiers they lead. Additionally, there will likely be challenges from stakeholders connected to schools that would lose ROTC scholarship or allocations. The Army will need to effectively message the overall purpose of this policy and seek to minimize the impact of decreased ROTC scholarships at any one school or within any one state.

Policy Option Two: Reallocate Combat Arms Branch Assignments

Policy option two seeks to reallocate combat arms career field allocations proportionately, between ROTC and USMA. Compared to the larger ROTC cadet population, USMA is significantly less racially diverse, but receives more combat arms slots. Additionally, this policy option makes two assumptions. First, the academic and physical requirements for cadets branching combat arms remain the same. Second, the Army continues placing the same value on combat arms experience and command when selecting General Officers. Accordingly, this policy option rebalances the disparity and provides equal opportunities to cadets, regardless of commissioning source, all else being equal. Since cadets must fill all ROTC branch allotments, but now with a more diverse pool of qualified cadets, the racial diversity of combat arms officers and commanders will likely increase. This benefits the Army in the immediate and will grow the pool of qualified minority officers for General Officers' consideration.

The second policy option has high feasibility, but faces moderate challenges to its acceptability. There are no anticipated significant impacts to personnel or other resources and overall financial costs are minimal,

making this option feasible. The Army's primary personnel management commands, Human Resource Command and Cadet Command, as well as USMA, would shape policy implementation and contribute to annual assessments to reveal unanticipated impacts to commissioning sources' recruitment efforts. However, public support, especially by key USMA stakeholders, would likely challenge this policy's acceptability. USMA alumni, local partners, and others will likely argue that USMA is the premier commissioning source and is subsequently justified receiving more combat arms branch assignments. To overcome this obstacle, the Army must illustrate that the quality of newly commissioned combat arms officers remains the same, but the racial composition is more representative of the United States and enables the benefits of diversity.

This policy option faces significant challenges to its suitability. First, it only generates increased opportunities for minorities to commission into combat arms branches, but does not directly address minority cadets self-selecting into non-combat arms career fields. It also does not mandate racial quotas, which is a practice the military does not implement. Additionally, even if more minorities enter these combat arms career fields, there is no guarantee they will serve long enough or have successful careers that make them competitive for General Officer appointment. Similarly, the changes to branch allocations could unintentionally prevent the best-suited or most gifted cadets from gaining the required experience in combat arms career fields and be competitive for senior level promotion. For these reasons, the Army must conduct annual assessments and qualitative studies to overcome these challenges. Annual assessments will reveal the racial characteristics within each branch and at each rank. Additionally, further studies will help uncover why officers continue to serve and seek command over other career options. It may take the Army years to collect the data for the evaluations and to understand the policy option's full impact. However, the Army requires this information to ensure the policy achieves its overall goal. Regardless, for a quicker enhancement to suitability, policy option two needs augmenting by policy option three.

Policy Option Three: Establish a Minority Mentorship Program

Policy option three seeks to increase minority cadets self-selecting into combat arms career fields and increase qualified minority officers'

retention rates by establishing a formal leadership mentorship program. This program allows senior officers to discuss racism, openly and directly, within the force and effective ways to address it. Although all career fields would participate, this program enables minority officers that serve in a combat arms branch or served with combat arms units to discuss its benefits and offer specific career advice. The target audience would be cadets still deciding on a potential career field and junior officers. Overall, this option assists the Army in increasing minorities entering combat arms career fields and retaining top minority talent, which subsequently increases the pool of qualified officers for senior level promotions. Moreover, it may also have the positive unintended consequence of increasing minority recruitment by highlighting to potential recruits the Army's commitment to minority development.

There are moderate challenges to the minority mentorship program's feasibility. The most likely challenge would be the limited number of senior minority officers. These officers need to volunteer and should ideally be located on the same installation as their mentees to facilitate face-to-face meetings. To help overcome these challenges, especially during the pilot phase, the program should allow for geographically separated officers to pair and subsequently rely on virtual mentorship meetings.

More troubling though, this policy option would face substantial threats to its acceptability. The mentorship program's assessments and pilot phase will incur a moderate financial cost. However, the primary threat to acceptability would be the resistance to establishing a mentorship program that excludes most officers and all enlisted members. To overcome this, the Army may need to expand the scope of the mentorship program to incorporate all officers and eventually establish a similar program for enlisted soldiers. Although the expansion of the mentorship program would lead to multiple benefits, it would increase cost, further hindering financial acceptability.

Similarly, this policy option faces significant challenges to its suitability. The Army needs to ensure it can correlate non-white recruitment, retention, and job performance directly with this program; controlling for independent variables that also have a significant influence on those metrics will be difficult. Nonetheless, assessments of the program that also

incorporate survey feedback from participants would assist in determining correlations. However, as mentioned above, if the mentorship program expands, then the benefits for other officers may dilute the benefits for minorities.

Conclusion

Although the U.S. Army has significantly increased aspects of diversity, racial minority Americans remain underrepresented as commissioned officers, especially in the General Officer ranks; the Army must implement policy to resolve this inequality. This underrepresentation is problematic and conversely, proportionate representation would lead to multiple positive outcomes. The research shows a strong correlation between increased team and leader diversity and effectively processing complex information to generate innovative, creative, and efficient solutions. General Officers require these benefits to overcome the long-term and complex challenges of adversarial nation-states and non-state actors. Additionally, increased diversity among the Army's senior leaders improves the civil-military relationship by ensuring Generals are representative of the soldiers they lead and the nation they serve.

Framed by open system theory, a thorough analysis of those three group's compositions and a variety of institutional and cultural impediments to increasing diversity reveal the scale of the problem and educates pragmatic policy options. The quantitative analysis highlights the current and projected future racial disparity between Army Generals, their subordinates, and the American public. The literature argues this problem persists because cadets are self-selecting out of career fields that would make them significantly more competitive for consideration for General Officer and the disproportionate allotment of those career field assignments to USMA. Collectively, this reduces the pool of highly competitive minorities for General Officer consideration. To overcome these challenges, three policy options seek to increase minorities commissioning, serving in combat arms career fields, and remaining in the service. Ultimately, this allows the Army to harness the benefits of a diverse organization and improve the critical civil-military relationship more effectively.

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